

# CO-OPERATIVE REVIEW



A publication for community based and worker based co-operatives in Victoria

No. 6 November 1982

## MOTOR CYCLE CO-OPERATIVE

The Minister of Employment and Training, Mr Jim Simmonds officially opened Victoria's first legal motor cycle park on Saturday October 2nd, 1982.

The Frankston Motor Cycle Co-operative is funded by the Ministry's Employment and Training Co-operative Development Programme for a total of \$32,352.

\$15,588 had initially been given to the co-operative. The Minister handed over a cheque for a further \$5,588 at the ceremony. A large crowd watched the opening activities which included exhibition riding by champion motor cyclists; Mike Landman, Peter Whittington and Shane Milbourn and bike riding by Freeway Motor-cycle Club members.

The Minister of Employment and Training, Mr Simmonds said that the Frankston Motor Cycle Park will operate in 20 acres of beautiful bushland leased from the Frankston City Council. "The concept of the park is that it will revolve around the recreational use of off road motor cycles with the emphasis on providing social outings for the whole family.

"The idea behind the creation of a motor cycle park was a perceived community need and the project has been greatly assisted by community based groups such as the Neighbourhood Employment Development Programme, the Frankston Police Community Involvement Programme, the Frankston and District Motor Cycle Club, local residents and Frankston City Council."

Mr Simmonds stressed that participants would be covered by Lloyds of London for personal accident and insurance.

He said that the project had created three jobs, that of Park Manager, Canteen Supervisor and Workshop Supervisor. The co-operative currently has 2,000 members and offers riding facilities and hire for unregistered motor cycles and motor cyclists.

A repair shop will be established to provide full maintenance facilities for running repairs as well as spare parts sales and a motor cycle hire service. Instruction will be provided by experienced

riders from the support groups including the Police Community Involvement Programme, the Frankston and district motor cycle club and the Australian Institute of Advanced Motorists.

The Premier's Department Vandalism Task Force made a video of the opening activities which will be released to councils throughout the State. The video is being jointly funded by the departments of Employment and Training and Youth Sport and Recreation.

## GOOD NEWS



### MINISTER SUPPORTS THE CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Mr. Jim Simmonds, Minister for Employment and Training has allocated an additional \$250,000 to the Co-operative Development Programme, bringing the total financial year budget to \$850,000.

On September 30, at a meeting of all members of the Co-operative Development Programme, Mr Simmonds announced that he had reallocated an additional \$250,000, on top of the Treasury Vote of \$600,000, to the programme. This additional money will allow the Co-operative Development Programme to expand and consider some new applications for funding.

This extra funding is evidence of the Minister's strong support and ongoing commitment to the programme, and we would like to congratulate him on his decision to provide this extra money.



# WHITHER THE C.D.P.?

—by David Griffiths, co-ordinator of the  
Co-operative Development Programme.

In the last issue of the **Co-operative Review** (No 5 October 1982) concern was expressed about the future of the Co-operative Development Programme.

I would expect, however, that the decision of the Ministry to provide an additional \$250,000 on top of the budget figure of \$600,000 will allay these concerns — after all, \$850,000 is a 40% increase on the 1981-82 allocation of \$600,000.

The **Co-operative Review** did ask a number of questions about the original budget allocation of \$600,000 and I would propose, therefore, to respond to these questions.

## Why was no further allocation made?

The government's specific allocation to the programme was sufficient to meet existing commitments. The government also established broad priorities in the budget. The allocations it made gave priority to a programme for providing employment opportunities for the long-term unemployed. \$30 million was allocated to this Employment Initiatives Programme. It also increased significantly the ministry's funds for other employment and training programme, but it left the Minister to decide the priorities between the co-op and other programmes.

## With whom has the CDP lost favour?

It has certainly not lost favour with the government. The Minister has demonstrated that the Co-operative Development Programme is a priority.

## Will Mr. Simmonds be able to grant more money from the ministry?

The Minister has allocated an additional \$250,000. Quite clearly, therefore, the Minister regards the programme as important.

## What is the government's policy on continuation of the CDP?

The government does not yet have a policy on the continuation of the CDP. It continues as a three year experiment. The Minister for Employment and Training considers the programme important because it could provide considerable insights into the possibilities of long-term job creation, the structure and organisation of workplaces and work and

worker and/or community ownership and control of business enterprises. The continuation of the programme beyond 1982-83 will be subject to a review of its achievements and potential.

## Is the reference on page 56 of the budget estimates which refers to \$600,000 for loans and expenses a misprint?

There is no misprint. The \$600,000 can be used for grant or loan purposes. The appropriation will allow loans to be made. The question of whether loans should be made available under the programme is currently being examined.

## Will co-operatives in the programme be able to apply for monies under the new Employment Initiatives Programme as well as from the CDP?

The Co-operative Development Programme and the Employment Initiatives Programme are different programmes with different objectives and conditions. While it is not expected that many of the existing funded groups would receive funding under the Employment Initiatives Programme, funding may be justified if a co-operative is able to meet the objectives and conditions of that programme. It is also possible that some groups funded under the Employment Initiatives Programme might have the potential to develop into co-operative business enterprises.

The future of the Co-operative Development Programme is critically dependent upon the actual and perceived achievements and potential of the programme. In considering achievements, a number of questions are relevant e.g.

- Are the funded co-operatives becoming self-sufficient?
- What are the indicators of this self-sufficiency?
- Have the co-operatives established alternative ownership and control models for workplaces and work?
- What difference does worker and/or community ownership and control make to a business enterprise?
- Are the funded co-operatives becoming dependent upon government subsidy?
- Have the co-operatives demonstrated a commitment to employment growth which does not jeopardise their viability?
- Are the co-operatives operating in the mainstream economy?

- Is productivity higher in a co-operative business than in a more traditional business?
- Is job satisfaction higher in a co-operative business than in a more traditional business?
- How many jobs have been created in the CDP?
- What is the cost per job created?
- What are the possibilities for these jobs continuing?
- What is the potential for further job creation?
- What are the alternative possibilities for generating jobs?

## CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING PLANNING GROUP

### 1982 meeting timetable:

Time: 4pm — 6 pm.

Vocational Orientation  
Centre,  
42 Cardigan St.,  
Carlton.  
Ph: 347 7611 x 256.

### Dates:

November 16, 30.  
December 14.  
January 4, 18.  
February 1, 15.

## FEBRUARY CONFERENCE

Interested co-operative members are asked to mark in their calendars the week end of February 11th (Friday) to the 13th (Sunday). This is the date of a conference to be held for all C.D.P. co-operatives and to take place at Erskine House, Lorne. Sponsored by the Education and Training Unit. The agenda is yet to be set so all suggestions will be accepted.

Further information will be forwarded to co-operatives as details come to hand.

## CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED

Has your co-operative submitted material to a recent edition of the **Co-operative Review**? We seek involvement from co-operatives and hope to publish your material or pursue areas you express interest in.

Please do phone Karina, Tony or Wendy at the VOC (347 7611 ext. 256) with ideas for material for future editions



# SYBYLLA FEMINIST PRESS

*Sybylla Co-operative Press is Australia's only feminist press and specialises in cheap and efficient printing for feminist, gay, community and political groups.*

For **Co-operative Review** readers who don't know or aren't quite sure yet, Sybylla is a feminist printing co-operative which has been in operation for 6 years. The co-operative has 10 members, 6 of whom are employed at the press. We run as a collective, with all members having equal say in decisions. Sybylla is an all-women co-operative, and is a closed group, although we do take new members from time to time, as jobs fall vacant or as new jobs are created through the expansion of the business.

After receiving money from the Co-operative Development Programme this year one of the first things we did was move. Sybylla Press has been at its new premises at 193 Smith Street, Fitzroy for almost 4 months now, and we find that we have benefitted from our new location in many ways. As well as an increasing steady clientele (the result partly of increased facilities and partly of relocating in a busier commercial centre), we have found that we have become much busier as a retail outlet for our books, posters, badges, etc., and have attracted much lively interest from passers-by.



This means that we have received a lot more work lately from the commercial/business sector in our neighbourhood, because we are accessible and offer a good service. However, we have always considered women's, community and political groups as our base, and have a commitment to providing a good service to this section of the community. We still give work from other community groups priority, and we would like to draw the attention of other co-operatives to Sybylla Press as a printing service that could well suit their needs better than do many commercial printers both in terms of our prices and our service.



*RNS/Tribune*

We offer a small offset printing service, using both Multilith 1250 and 1850 presses. These can print paper sizes up to 18 x 15" - much of the work we do is double quarto or A4-format newsletters and magazines, pamphlets, handbills and some posters, but we also print letterheads and business cards and other advertising material. We now have a process camera and can make line and screened bromides to assist in the preparation of artwork as required. We offer platemaking, trimming, binding and collating services as part of the contracted printing jobs, but also as a separate service to customers.

The future is looking brighter for us as printers as business picks up. At the moment we have taken on the job of printing the **Co-operative Review**, and also share work with Correct Line Graphics and Red Letter Press. We would like to print much more for other co-operatives and would appreciate the opportunity to quote on printing work.

## Feminist Publishing

Sybylla's other area of interest is publishing. Over the years we have helped many writers to self-publish, and we con-

tinue to give particular assistance to self-publishing authors by advising/helping them with design, layout, editing and proofing before we print their work. In many cases we have also been able to help independent authors with distribution by stocking their work for sale at Sybylla and by listing it on our mail-order catalogue. For years Sybylla has also operated as a publisher too, producing a range of feminist cards, stickers, badges and posters. Last year we decided to attempt a larger project and in June this year our first book, **Frictions**, edited by Alison Tilson and Anna Gibbs, was launched at the Women & Labour Conference. The book has sold well (most important) and has been very well received by reviewers and critics, not to mention readers (also good to know) - the book is on sale at Sybylla but can also be ordered from bookshops. We hope to continue to publish on this scale, and have several projects on the way, but finding the capital to get them underway is, and will probably always remain, a serious obstacle for an organisation such as Sybylla. We have yet to discover whether a printing business, even a successful one, can actually afford to subsidise a publishing operation. Time will tell.



# HOUSING CO-OPERATIVES

*Co-operative housing in Victoria is fostered through a co-operative service called C.H.A.S., an offshoot of Shelter. This article comes from CHAS.*

## What is co-operative housing

In Victoria, rental housing co-operatives (RHCs) are independent, self-directing, legal entities which manage Ministry of Housing-owned properties within a defined, local community.

Essentially, RHCs are an exercise in devolving management control over public housing into the hands of the tenant members who make up a co-operative. Each tenant who lives in a RHC-managed house automatically has a right to an equal say in decision-making in relation to all matters concerning their housing.

Set up as either a registered co-operative or a non-profit company an RHC's formal, legal structure guarantees its tenant members one vote each on the Association's governing body. Every year the tenant members elect, from among themselves and, in some cases, from representatives of the local community, a Board of Directors to manage the affairs of the Association. Alternatively, decision-making could become the responsibility of the whole of the membership through regular, general meetings.

RHCs depend for their healthy operation on the active participation of tenant members. In the establishment phase particularly, ready access is needed to advice in the "special skills" areas of law, accounting, building and community work.

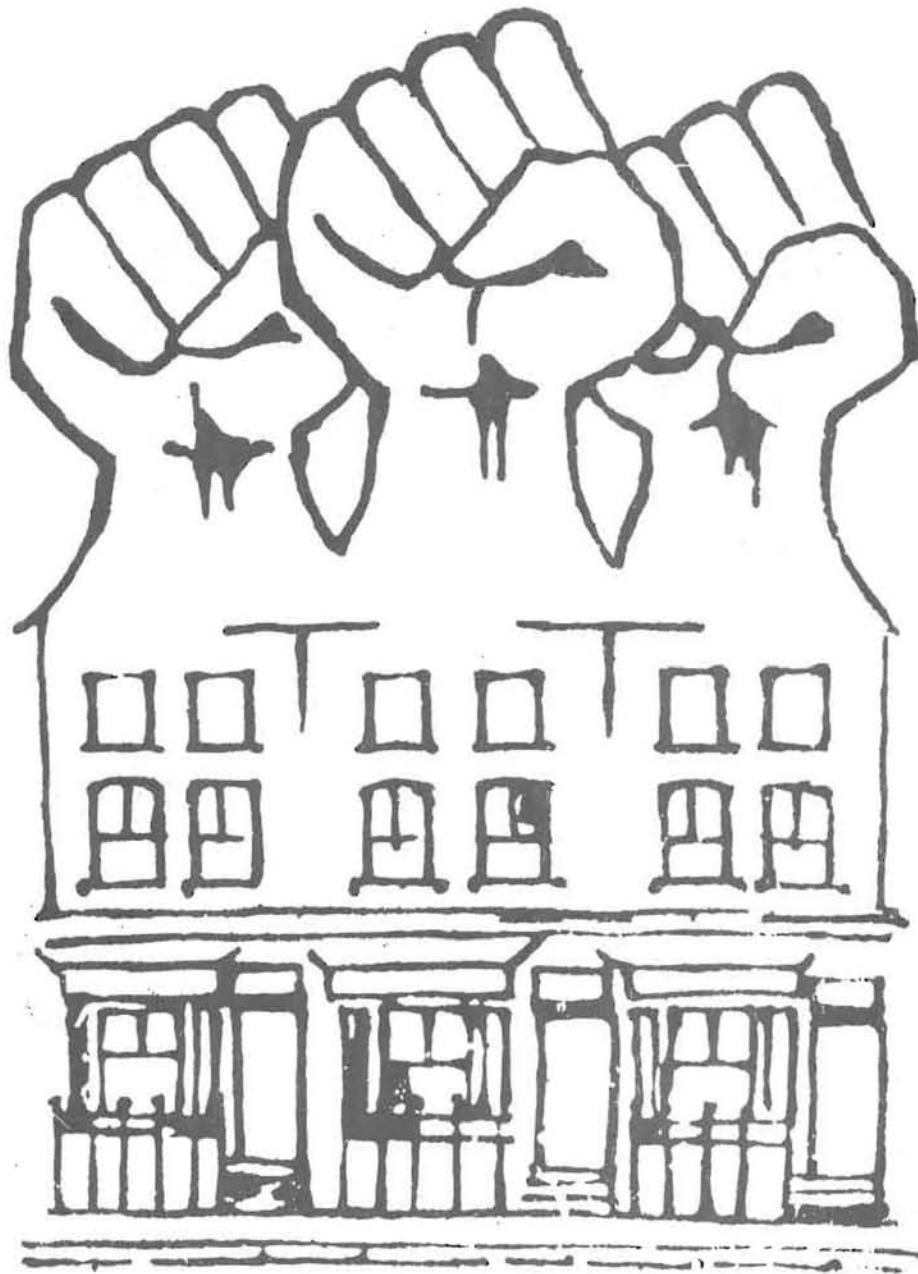
Basic administration and implementation of decisions is usually carried out by a paid housing officer who is selected by an RHC's members and receives his/her direction from the Association's governing body.

## Why co-operative housing?

Low income people in Victoria have only three "choices" — to become a private tenant, to become a Housing Commission tenant, or to become homeless. Home ownership is beyond the reach of a household earning under \$250 a week.

Lack of basic rights and high rents mean that the private rental market does not provide a satisfactory alternative.

Present public housing management by the Housing Commission suffers from many of the problems associated with the centralisation of power.



# Tenant action!

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**Tenants Union and  
Tenants Advice  
Service.....419 7774**

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Co-operative housing's ability to adapt to local needs and conditions, and its potential for increasing people's control over their own lives makes it a real choice for low income earners. Co-operative housing allows low income people, for the first time, access to the major advantages of home ownership at a price which they can afford.

#### The co-operative housing movement

Although England was the birthplace of the co-operative movement in the mid-nineteenth century, co-operative housing plays a far bigger part in other countries, such as the Scandinavian countries of Sweden, Denmark and Norway, and to an increasing extent in Canada and the USA. For example, in the city of Montreal in Canada there are over 60 rental co-ops.

Without a government sponsorship, there is unlikely to be any large scale setting up of rental co-ops. Funding for the purchase of houses and promotion of co-ops as an alternative form of tenure requires a commitment of capital resources.

One alternative to government resources is illustrated by the growth of co-operative housing in Scandinavia and Canada. There the impetus and sustenance for co-operative housing has been provided by unions, building co-op societies and national tenants groups.

These co-ordinating groups have the organisational and financial resources necessary to initiate a large scale movement and to later involve the government in the financing of co-operative housing.

#### How rental co-ops have started

The initiative for setting up the pilot RHC, the Fitzroy Collingwood Rental Housing Association (FCRHA) came from the local community. An interim management committee made up of local representation from municipal councils and professionals with skills in law, finance, social work and building met for two years before making a detailed submission to the Ministry of Housing. The RHC was set up in 1978.

After evaluating the FCRHA for three years, the Ministry decided in July, 1981, to advertise for submissions from groups working to establish RHCs and choose the best two as the basis for development of further RHCs. An assessment panel which included representatives from outside the Ministry selected submissions from groups in Mornington and Williamstown as the two best out of the five detailed proposals considered.

Both the Mornington and Williamstown RHCs have registered as co-operatives. It is proposed that each will eventually manage a maximum of 50-70 houses.

Late in 1981, the Ministry decided to take the initiative itself and set up RHC in Carlton in existing scattered housing which it owned. The Ministry has convened meetings where tenants and local "special skills" people have been invited to form an interim management committee. A Ministry-paid housing officer selected by the interim committee, is helping in the drafting of a proposal for the Carlton RHC.

Yet another type of co-operative was established on a public housing estate in Northcote at the end of 1981. After a year's negotiations with the Ministry, a group called the Womens' Housing Co-operative was granted the right to select tenants and supervise lease conditions for a block of 12 flats in the Northcote estate. In other management areas, however, this group has only limited autonomy.

The Ministry is planning to set up as many as another five RHCs in 1982-83 using the assessment panel process. A RHC Unit has been established within the Ministry.

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## WOMEN'S HOUSING CO-OP

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— reprinted from Shelter Victoria Newsletter

The Women's Housing Co-operative is a community advancement society within the meaning of the Co-operation Act and was incorporated as a legal entity in November last year.

A Board of Directors consisting of seven members of the co-operative is the decision making body of the organisation. The current Directors are not tenants, however it is planned that tenants living in the Co-op flats will fill vacancies on the Board as they occur.

The group operates under a head lease with the Housing Commission which outlines the obligations of rent collection and maintenance for which the Co-op is responsible. The Co-op is also responsible for tenant selection. At the moment we have 11 flats.

Each tenant of the Co-op holds a lease with the Board of Directors which is re-

newable. Tenants are also under an obligation to attend weekly residents meetings and monthly board meetings. Meetings of the residents group deals with maintenance and management problems, complaints against tenants and the re-letting of flats. The meetings also discuss the use of community resources and organise social and support activities.

Tenants attend Board meetings to develop an understanding of the role of the Board of Directors and to participate in the decision making process. Tenants are also attending meetings with the HCV and taking increasing responsibility in tasks such as rent collection. In this way, processes of the Board will be eventually taken over by the tenants as a step towards self-management.

Glenda Davis is employed as part-time worker by the co-operative with funding from the Ministry of Housing. Funding for the position expires before June and we shall be asking that it be renewed. The project is regarded as being in a pilot stage for 3 years and as the Co-op requires a personal transition and full participation from each tenant, a worker is needed to act as a resource and support person.

Unlike other Housing Co-operatives the Women's Housing Co-op received no financial support from the Housing Commission for administration costs. These costs have been met mostly by the support of other groups when arguing our case for expenses to be met by the Housing Commission.







- Chris Reidy left Brunswick Work Co-operative on the 23rd October to start his own silk screen printing business, "Rage Posters", which had its official opening on Wednesday 3rd November. All of the BWC workers will miss Chris a great deal.

- Brunswick have recently printed three new posters
  - Celebration of the Tribune Fair (CPA) which was held at the North Melbourne Town Hall on 13th November.
  - Anti-uranium poster, looking at the business interests behind the Uranium Industry, and land rights.
  - 1983 Calender depicting the history of the Australian Film Industry (30" x 40").

All these posters and many more are available from Brunswick Work Co-op. 173 Albion Street, Brunswick. Ph: 383 3087

- Good news about the group of Turkish women interested in forming a co-operative around the activity of carpet-making. The market consultant has presented his final report on the carpet proposal and while carpet making seems a slight possibility, a potential for repair work has been found. Other avenues still to be looked at include the manufacture of specially commissioned one-off designs as well as a carpet-cleaning service. The Turkish Carpet Making Group will continue to look at the possibilities.
- If you're wanting to see an example of Public Images work then your chances are increasing every day. At present you'll simply need to drive past the Paisley High School in Newport to cat-

ch a more than lively mural as the act of creation takes place over the next month or so. No need to worry about adding to the crowd — the group has just finished painting a mural at Tallangatta with the help of 300 school-children. They also worked at the Westfest recently and are soon to start on murals at the Vocational Orientation Centre and the Caulfield Festival.

- Congratulations to Goldfields Radio 3CCC for recently having achieved six months on air. By way of celebration the station has taken a sizable step towards full-time broadcasting, now on the air from 7 a.m. till midnight, seven days a week. — 102 hours a week. A training course for presenters is to be conducted on the last weekend in November. If you're particularly interested in attending and would like to help out at the station, they'd be happy to hear from you.
- Workers at Loch Ard, undeterred by the rejection of their application for funds to purchase a restaurant have decided to borrow \$10,000 from other sources. The intention is to buy out the shares of non-worker shareholders as well as purchase the licence to operate the restaurant they were initially going to buy. If all goes well, they'll open the restaurant on the 13th November.
- Wendy Smith has resigned from the Ministry of Employment and Training. As readers know Wendy was on secondment from the Ministry to the co-operative education and training unit. Her resignation takes effect from 30th November, 1982 and the unit thanks Wendy for the work she has done during her secondment.
- If you have any news of interest you'd like to see included in this space, ring it through on 347 7611 ext 256.

## FEDERATION NEWS

— from W.W. Rawlinson, executive officer of the Co-operative Federation of Victoria.

### Meeting With Minister of Agriculture

Again following the practice established by the Federation in maintaining contact with relevant Government Ministers, a deputation from the Federation met with the Minister of Agriculture Mr. Kent and had general discussions on

the role of co-operation in agriculture and in Victoria, and the objects and functions of the Co-operative Federation of Victoria in protecting and promoting the Co-operative sector in this State.

### Visit to Open Channel

Conforming to its recently adopted practice of visiting member co-operatives, the Council of the Federation visited Open Channel Co-operative prior to the September Council Meeting.

Open Channel is currently working towards developing public television services and as readers will be aware trial runs were held using Channel 0-28 in Melbourne earlier this year.

The visit was useful to the Council who were able to see for themselves the structure and operations of this interesting Co-operative.

### Co-operative Society Legislation

Council accepted recommendations from its Legislation Committee for a submission to be made to the Legislative Review Committee established by the Minister administering the Co-operation Act 1981. The submission proposed amendments to the Act in the following areas:

1. That a statutory definition of a Co-operative be included in the Act.
2. That the minimum number of members required to establish a farm production co-operative be reduced from the present seven to three.
3. The act to be amended to allow foreign societies to become members of the Federation.
4. Provision to be made for shares of non-active members to be forfeited to the Co-operative. Removal of the existing provision for shares of non-traceable members to be transferred to the State Treasurer.
5. Provision to enable bonus shares to be issued to members from a reserve created as a result of revaluation of assets not acquired for the purpose of profit.
6. A request that the restriction on the maximum number of Directors be removed and that the Act be brought into line with the Companies Act whereby the number of Directors is stated to be a minimum of three.
7. To establish a new type of Co-operative called "Industrial Society" in which employee members may become Directors.
8. A provision to enable societies to change from one kind to another without the process of winding up and reformation.



# STONEBRIDGE ASIAN FOODS

— by David Whitchurch  
Director — Loch Ard Co-operative

A group of Hindi speaking Indian women approached the Brent Co-operative Development Agency in early 1981 for advice on how to utilise their desires to earn an income by manufacturing and selling Indian food.

Not one of the fourteen women could speak English. The Brent Indian Association solved that problem by appointing a liaison officer.

Our first problem was to consider the aims and desires of the women. They wanted to:

- earn income
- work at home or nearby
- work together
- make Indian food
- obtain job satisfaction.

To facilitate the satisfaction of these aims the four CDA advisers (2 marketing consultants, an accountant and myself, a lawyer) set to work.

There was no problem working together in their home environment. The women all lived on the Stonebridge Housing Estate on which were several kitchens, any one of which would have been capable of being adapted to their needs. After discussions with the Brent Housing Authority and the Stonebridge Housing Estate Committee it was decided the women could use one kitchen on a temporary basis, free of charge, with an option to sub-lease facilities at a later date. Prior to this the women had been using their own kitchens which presented many problems including lack of product control and continuity.

The women had no business experience so we conducted several workshops with them, in addition to developing a marketing strategy which enabled them to see the application of these business principles in their own case. We knew this would facilitate a better learning programme as opposed to pure theory.

The main hurdle was the marketing survey. Would the various foods sell? The women specialised in making samosas which are small curry "pasties" but also had a good varied range of products.

The CDA took the food orders, mainly through key consumers who were generally friends or business associates. These key consumers placed "bulk Friday lunch orders" every Monday for two months. After a slow beginning the co-operative was selling 20 dozen articles per week.



We then surveyed the customers. Results were collated under several basic headings:

- Location
- Product used
- Quantity
- Acceptance of product
- Costing and profit margins.

So after two months we had a bank of information which suggested the co-operative had products which were marketable in a very competitive market place. Consumer acceptance was the key. On the other hand we had streamlined the costs of production which enabled the co-operative to undercut its main competitors.

The basis for this successful market survey was good organisation and hard work. The CDA workers collected the food every Friday morning and delivered to various points across London. Not all deliveries were made...Greg found himself in a horrible traffic jam one day; too late for lunch delivery he ate sixteen samosas at the Hyde Park corner. Another satisfied customer!

The women kept their own accounts, books and purchased the ingredients.

Slowly but surely a cohesive unit of workers eventuated, providing them with a great possibility of future development and thus economic independence

The CDA utilised other resources! The deliveries were taken over by the Brent Transport Co-operative. The package printing was done by the Brent Multi-lingual Print Shop, the first multi-lingual printer in England. And on it goes!

The CDA pulled together its resources and after six months the Asian Food Co-operative put in a successful application for funding to the Brent Council, the basis of which was the more than favourable results of the market survey.

Most important of all was the fact that fourteen people and their families who were otherwise unemployed had utilised their energy and desires to achieve their five aims, this being done on a co-operative basis. Without that "home-industry" co-operative philosophy these women would never have embarked on such an enterprise.

Next issue I will write about the reggae musicians co-operative: The Brent Black Music Co-operative. Stay tuned!



# THE LESSONS OF PAST EFFORT

— a brief history of the Young Christian Workers Co-operative Society

— by Tony Ayers, Education and Training Unit

The danger of any programme or action flushed with immediate enthusiasm is its tendency to deny its predecessors. The illusion of novelty not only fuels expectations well beyond the possible but dismisses the historical ground upon which its claims can be more closely scrutinized, the objective limits of its efforts discerned. In line with this proposition it would appear that some co-operatives formed in recent years under the Co-operative Development Programme (C.D.P.) would consider the long-standing co-operatives throughout Victoria to possess only formal similarities to themselves, lacking the explicitly political orientation which the C.D.P. would claim to encourage.

Yet a brief examination of past efforts towards establishing co-operatives suggests that some of the older co-operatives themselves began life not only as economic institutions of convenience. Similar to many of the present day C.D.P. co-operatives their own early days of formation saw due emphasis being given to the place of co-operation within an enlarged political context, as part of an on-going strategy which related to a particular conception of social life. While the specific content of their orientation was obviously different the subsequent fortunes of such groups provide a salutary lesson as to the difficulties involved for those who would see co-operatives as being capable of carrying forward a comprehensive programme of political or social reform.

One such group of interest in this regard is the Y.C.W. Co-operative Society. While not wishing to impose upon it the burden of strict illustration, the course of its history can be taken to testify to the commercial success able to be achieved through a co-operative business venture and, at the same time, raises questions as to how far such ventures are able to bear the hopes of their designers.

The Y.C.W. Co-operative Society is situated in A'Beckett Street, Melbourne, and stocks an astounding range of goods — from furniture, floor coverings to household electrical appliances, office furniture, as well as men's clothing and school uniforms. During a visit to its Melbourne offices, the Co-operative Re-

view was kindly provided with a brief summary of its beginnings by Mr Ted Long, its secretary and a long-time supporter of co-operatives in Victoria.

Ted Long himself was one of the originators of the Y.C.W.'s early interest in co-operatives, having joined the youth movement as a full-time worker in 1941 and later in 1945, accepting the position of its secretary. During this period, and most particularly the years 1943-45, the Y.C.W. was concerned with the economic future of young workers and commenced a simple savings scheme to encourage thriftiness. This operated as a minor aspect to the quite extensive social and sporting activities which the Y.C.W. organized for its members.

The saving scheme proved popular and steps were taken to find some legal means by which the arrangement could be formalized. In the course of these enquiries the Y.C.W. was informed by Federal Treasury that its savings scheme was illegal under the provisions of the wartime National Security Finance Regulations. The scheme was considered to amount to being an encouragement to save outside established banking institutions. As a result it ceased to operate.

Nevertheless, the success of the venture and the obvious interest of its members influenced the youth movement to think of other ways by which long-term benefits could be derived through an association of workers. The Y.C.W. Executive in conjunction with its chaplain, Father Lombard, came across the idea of co-operative housing. In 1944 measures were taken to form a Housing Co-operative Society and, partly as a result of the Y.C.W.'s initiative, the Co-operative Housing Society Act was presented to Parliament the same year and proclaimed in 1945.

The first Y.C.W. Housing Society acquired a loan from the National Bank and called for 100 members. Offering a low rate of interest and a long-term period of repayment the positions were quickly filled. As a follow-on to its success, other housing co-operatives, each with 100 members, were formed. By 1947 there were six co-operative housing societies under the auspices of the Y.C.W. with a total membership of between five to six hundred people and these were eventually grouped under the name of Security Co-operative Housing.

As the housing co-operatives took on their own identity, attention was then turned in the direction of a trading co-operative, to enable people to more readily furnish the homes they had purchased. Its success was to be similar to

that of the housing co-operatives, failing to record a surplus in only two years of its history up to the present day.

Little formal connection between the Trading Co-operative and the youth movement now exists. A representative of the youth group sits on the co-operative's Board of Directors but no financial sharing of resources occurs. The Y.C.W. is according to Ted Long "just glad to see an organization put into practice the principles of Christianity and humanity".

In spite of its business success it would be a serious error of perception were the co-operative to be viewed as having been preoccupied with material benefits. The formation of the co-operative coincided with a period of deep concern for Melbourne Catholics during the 40's and 50's. The apparent failure of capitalist production to sustain its own world brought into question fundamental areas of the social structure. Radical possibilities threatened to be placed upon the public agenda.

In that socialism addressed directly the economic circumstances of people's lives and provided a framework in which these could not only be interpreted but acted upon, Catholicism was now placed in a distressed position. The material circumstances of its flock would need be accorded greater attention if it was to counter what it thought to be the threatening spectre of socialism. In the face of capital's imminent collapse of faith, a new alternative would need be found, one which could convincingly be presented as an equally practical alternative conception to that of the left. As Ted Long described it the co-operative was to act as "a useful third force lever", one amongst a full range of Catholic social initiatives at the time.

Capital's ascendancy after the war need not be chronicled here. What is intriguing is that the co-operative's own success closely followed along the same track as the general economic recovery of those years. The third force failed to ever fully emerge.

Comparison can often be made to suffer from over-exertion in duty to those who would benefit from it. Nonetheless, the drawing of parallels with this episode of history and the present do seem valid. Economic and social life appear once more to be entering a state of deep crisis, with the ranks of unemployed again its immediately visible victims. Yet the nature and scope of the crisis would seem more fundamental than before. The social structure and cultural life as a whole is now subject to question.



Once again, co-operatives are spoken of as having an important role in pointing the way towards a social alternative. In spite of the left rhetoric used in some quarters of the co-operatives the alternative vision would seem as before to be substituting for an interpretation which might adequately explain the new crisis to hand.

The differences which mark the present circumstances are equally important. In the case of the Y.C.W. the endorsement of co-operative practices occurred within a framework of belief by no means entirely tied in service to the social structure. One suspects in the new situation that insofar as co-operatives might be taken by some to provide a life practice (as one particular writer in the last review was wishing to suggest) the opportunity arises for a form of cultural management to develop. A strict adherence to co-operative principles will not in itself provide an interpretation capable of anticipating such a direction.

# CHRISTMAS WITH HODJA

—by Hodja Educational Resources Co-operative.

"I'll never forget my first Christmas in Australia", writes Maria Csiky, in Hodja's latest publication, **Christmas for Children: A Multicultural Source Book**.

"It happened many, many years ago in a town called Mildura, where I lived with my husband and baby daughter in a migrant camp bordering desert country".

"Instead of the cold winter days and snow-capped rooftops and streets of my native city, Budapest, there in Mildura on the 24th of December, we woke to a hot summer's day. By mid-afternoon, the temperature had reached 45 degrees C and the heat inside our tin-hut had become unbearable. Its corrugated iron walls were sizzling with heat, so much so that we could not touch them with our bare hands".

"As I sat there, busily brushing away the cheeky bushflies, I kept remembering the beautiful Christmases of my childhood. . . . then and there I decided come what may, we must have a Christmas tree".

"But there were no fir trees growing in the desert. The best I could find was a little native shrub. I cut it down, took it home, and put it in a pot filled with soil. Then I bought two dozen birthday candles from the camp store and secured them with thin wire to the branches of my little 'Christmas tree'".

"For decorations I cut out small stars, angels and birds from silver foil and hung them on the tree and put presents under it. It was a pretty sight and I was delighted with my achievement".

*continued on page 10*

## PETTY CASH

*Recording petty cash is a simple procedure which should be understood by every co-operative member. Here it is explained by Roberta Barrand, administrative officer at the Vocational Orientation Centre.*

1. Petty cash is kept to purchase petty or small items when it is impractical to purchase by cheque, or to have invoiced as a debt.
2. Petty cash should be used only to purchase such items as stamps, fares, minor stationery items and tea/coffee making ingredients.
3. An amount is decided upon, usually \$20.00 is sufficient, and a cheque is drawn and cashed.  
This amount is entered in the Cash Payment Journal as Petty Cash Advance. This money is sometimes called a petty cash float.
4. Records of money spent will need to be recorded in a special Petty Cash Book. As the money is spent and the

original advance exhausted, the receipts are totalled and the amounts should agree with the debit column of the Petty Cash Book.

The receipts are clipped together, a cash cheque is drawn for the amount, the cheque number noted on the bundle of receipts and the receipts

filed. The transaction is again recorded in the Cash Payment Journal and a list of goods purchased and the cost of each item noted.

5. The Petty Cash Advance or float with new cash cheque and money on hand should now have returned to the original amount established (\$20.00).

Sample — Petty Cash Book					
Amounts	Date	Particulars	Stationary	Postage	Fares
10.00	Nov 1	Cheque rec.			
	2	P. stamps		1.62	
	4	Fares			.60
	4	Pens	2.10		
	5	Stamps		1.62	
	5	Fares			2.60
10.00			2.10	3.24	3.20
Total=8.54					
		Balance carried down		= 1.46	
1.46					
8.54	7	Balance Brought Down			
	7	Cheque Received			
	8	Stationary envelopes	3.00		
	9.	Stamps		1.62	
	10	Fares			.60
		etc. etc.			



"But by the time darkness fell, my little 'Christmas tree', so pretty a few hours before, was a sorry state indeed! In the heat inside the hut, its branches had wilted and drooped and the melting candles had become crooked and bent like little horseshoes!"

"In spite of all this, we had a lovely Christmas Eve because we were together, my husband, my baby and I, holding hands and singing the same old carol, here in a new country that was to become our home. . ."

Maria Csiky's story is one of the many personal accounts of Christmas that appears in Hodja's multicultural source book. **Christmas for Children** is also jam-packed full of information about the origins and history of Christmas and other "festivals of light" like Channukah (celebrated by Jewish people) and Loy Krathong (celebrated by Thais) and the origins and evolution of the Christmas Calendar and symbols.

It includes detailed chapters on Christmas customs around the world — in the Middle East, Great Britain and Ireland, Europe, the Mediterranean, Asia and the Pacific.

Did you know, for instance, that "Carols by Candlelight" is a unique Australian custom? This tradition originated last century, when Cornish miners in Moonta in South Australia would leave the coal-face on Christmas Eve and gather at the loading platform to sing Wesleyan carols by the light of 'fatjacks' — tallow candles stuck with clay to the brims of their safety hats. Gradually, this spontaneous event was formalised and the words of the carols to be sung were printed. By the 1890s the service was being held by Chinese lantern-light in Adelaide's Victoria Park.

'Carols by Candlelight' began in Melbourne on an organised scale in 1937 and other cities and towns throughout Australia have now adopted this custom.

**Christmas for Children** also includes many activities, recipes, and carols (with music) which will interest children (and adults) of all ages. Teacher's notes mean that the book is also easily utilised in the class-room.

**Christmas for Children** is part of the Hodja festival series. **Easter for Children: A Multicultural Source Book** has also just been published. Both books are available at \$6.75 (postage included) from Hodja Educational Resources Co-operative, 135 Church St., Richmond. 3121. Phone enquiries: (03) 429 6111.

## IS WORK MAKING YOU SICK?

*When industry is designed to maximise profits owners/managers are reluctant to expend money for the health and safety of workers. It is to be hoped that when workers own/have significant power in their workplace health and safety become paramount. Have you evaluated your co-operative on this issue?*

*The greatest support for improving industrial health and safety comes from individual trade unions and the ACTU with research and backing from workers' health centres across Australia. The following article is taken from a Western Region Health Centre pamphlet written especially for workers in traditional workplaces. The article makes relevant general comments, however for more detailed information contact your own union.*

Today, many workers are faced with health and safety risks because of the introduction of new technology or materials.

- In industrialised countries, a new chemical is introduced into workplaces every twenty (20) minutes.
- Chemicals can cause cancer or damage to major organs such as the brain, lungs, kidneys and liver. They can also cause dermatitis, burns, damage to foetuses and sterility in both men and women. Many of these substances act so slowly that the damage is not noticed for years.
- Repetitive work, noise, vibration, radiation, extremes of heat or cold can be harmful to health.
- In NSW, a worker is injured or made ill at work on average every two minutes. Don't rely on management to protect you from health and safety hazards. They will only do so if those hazards are affecting their profits.

Government Inspectors don't have time to properly check for hazards and so leave it to management. Many health hazards are not yet adequately regulated by law.

It is your life and health that is at risk. You cannot rely on the protection given by management. It is up to you to protect yourselves.

You don't have to be an expert to check your workplace for health and safety hazards. You can rely on your own eyes, ears, nose and common sense to find dangers. The people best qualified to identify dangerous situations are those who have to face them every day in their workplace. You might not know much about the thousands of chemicals with dangerous properties but you can find out about the few that you use on your job.



### Getting Organised

Getting healthy and safe working conditions should involve everybody in the workplace. Everyone has ideas and information about their own particular job.

In Britain and Sweden workplace elected health and safety committees are common. In Britain the unions have won the right to have health and safety representatives in every workplace. In ideal situations these representatives report to a union health and safety committee independent from management.



The Australian Council of Trade Unions now recommends that a similar system be established here.

The ACTU proposes that health and safety representatives have the right to:

- regularly inspect the workplace for hazards
- have access to information from management about every substance and process used in the workplace,
- stop work when an immediate risk to health and safety is suspected.

The first step in trying to get these rights is to form a health and safety committee on the job. Even a very small group of interested workers is a start.

The most useful tools in the checking of your workplace for hazards are the pencil and note book. Records should be kept of all complaints and of everything found. List the hazard, its exact location, the people affected, whether it is a daily problem or an occasional one, the possible cause and possible ways of fixing it. A camera can also be useful in keeping records.

### Finding Hazards

There are several steps to be taken in finding health and safety hazards.

- The workplace should be regularly inspected.
- All materials used must be identified and information gathered about them.
- Accident and sickness records should be checked.

### Workplace Inspection

If your union has good support on the job, then workplace inspections can be formal walk arounds by the safety committee or shop floor elected health and safety representatives. However, inspections can also be done informally by getting people in each section to keep their eyes open and take notes about their own section. One person or, preferably, a committee can collect and compile the information from each section.

The first step in an inspection is to list the obvious problems. Get as many people as possible to add to the list the hazards they know about. Write down each problem, its cause and location.

A plan of the workplace is needed. This can be obtained from the management or roughly drawn by workers. On the plan you need to note:

- the numbers and places of people working in each area.
- the positions of access, fire escapes, stairs, machines, storage, ventilation systems, lifts and hoists and so on.
- the position of all hazards found and all accidents.

### Investigate Substances/Materials

The use of chemicals in various industrial

processes can have long term ill effects on workers. For each chemical used, find out:

- What is the proper chemical name?
- How can the substance enter the body?
- Does it have immediate (acute) effects?
- Does it have long-term (chronic) effects?
- What exposure levels produce these effects?
- Can the substance alter into a more dangerous substance (e.g. when heated)?
- What precautions are needed?
- What protective gear is needed?
- What precautions are needed for spillage and fire?
- Are there any special first aid procedures?

### Keep Sickness Records

Often there is no information on the health effects of new processes used in industry, in which case workers become the guinea pigs. In these situations it is advisable to survey those using the new materials for possible ill effects. In any case, sickness and accident records can be a valuable source of information about hazards in your workplace. Properly kept records can be used to back up your argument that certain problems need to be dealt with. They can also help you decide on priorities for action.

Identifying hazards is only the first step — taking action to defend your health is the important part.

## INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

### Austria

In 1982 Co-op Austria is creating 200 more places for apprentices in their large national co-operative organisation. The Austrian Co-operative Movement is greatly interested in helping their government to combat unemployment among young people. It is, for the Austrian Co-operative Movement, a social and political duty to create work places for the younger generation and it is hoped they will lead the way and set an example to private enterprises.

Co-op Austria already has approximately 2,000 apprentices, who are being trained for future work in the varied activities of the movement.

### Bulgaria

The BULGARCOOP foreign trade association of the Bulgarian Co-operative Movement has celebrated its 20th anniversary. BULGARCOOP has established commercial relations with 250 organisations and companies in 50 countries in Europe, Asia and Africa. However, its principle trading partners are co-opera-

tive organisations of the socialist countries.

### France

Three French Co-operative banks have not been nationalised by the French government. The National Assembly released the three banks, conditional upon their accepting the appointment of a Government Commissioner and an employee on their boards of Directors. The most influential of the three is Banque Federative du Credit Mutuel (BFCM) whose headquarters are based in Strasbourg. BFCM employs some 850 people and has a capital base of 296 million French francs.

### India

Prices in India as everywhere else are rising steadily, and have done so for some time, and the poor being especially affected.

In June 1974 in Pune the India Community Kitchen was set up. Its aim is to help feed the poorer members of the community and is run on a non-profit no-loss basis. It employs 300 people, mainly women, and also provides employment for the poor. It is largely dependent on voluntary agencies.

Pune now has 10 such kitchen which serve simple but nutritional food and is run at the lowest budget, but efficiently. Due to the growing number of people relying on the service, a van service has also started. There is not enough accommodation for the numbers. However, plans are being made for 2 new food service centres and a complex of village industries. The government of Maharashtra has granted a 200 acre site and further assistance is given by the State Bank and Khadi, and Village Industries Commission. This will result in more people being served, and of course, provide more employment.

### Japan

A new co-operative food centre has been opened in Nishinomiya City, Hyogo Prefecture. ZEN-NOH, the National Federation of Agricultural Co-operative Associations and Nada-Kobe Consumers' Co-operatives — Japan's largest consumer co-operative society, have jointly financed and built the Co-operative Food Centre, which is now Japan's largest perishable food packaging centre. This is the first tie-up for a joint venture between agricultural and consumer co-operatives in Japan.

### Singapore

Recently the Singapore Government Servants Co-operative Thrift and Loan Society celebrated its 56th anniversary with a grand dinner and dance.



# COMING ALIVE AS A CO-OP

IN GROWTH TO ECONOMIC VIABILITY...  
CO-OPERATIVES MAY PASS THRU 3 STAGES:-  
WONDER... BLUNDER... THUNDER

## WONDER PERIOD



"CHANGE THE WORLD"  
"HIGH HOPES"  
"FULL OF CONFIDENCE"

BUT, AFTER  
12-18 MONTHS,  
A NEW SMALL  
BUSINESS MAY  
ENTER THE...

HOWEVER,  
DON'T DESPAIR  
NEXT COMES TH...

## BLUNDER PERIOD

CHARACTERISED BY:

- ERODING SELF-CONFIDENCE
- "MAYBE WE DON'T KNOW AS MUCH AS WE THOUGHT?"
- ANXIETY
- IDENTITY CRISIS
- INERTIA
- "WHAT DO WE DO NOW?"

MARKETS DIDN'T DEVELOP? BUSINESS  
BOOKS DON'T BALANCE? IF ONLY  
WHAT PRODUCTS? PRICE?  
PLAN? IGNORANCE  
PLACE? FINANCIAL RE...  
DEBT? WHAT ELSE CAN GO WR...

## THUNDER PERIOD



WHEREIN  
ALL IS AICE

- Realistic Goals
- Marketing Statistics
- Record Keeping
- Money Management
- Business Skills
- Social/Community Involvement

ABC CO-OP  
CASH FLOW STATEMENT  
ABC CO-OP  
STATEMENT OF PROFIT & LOSS  
ABC CO-OP  
BALANCE SHEET  
MONTH ENDING 1/1/1982

SOUND BUSINESS  
PRACTICE  
HELPS TO  
PLAN,  
PERFORM,  
REVIEW & ADJUST  
ACTIVITIES!

HELP IS AVAILABLE FROM THE  
CDP BUSINESS ADVISORY SERVICE  
AND THE  
CO-OP EDUCATION & TRAINING UNIT